FEB 3 1958

DEMOCRATIC
GERMAN REPORT

VOL. VII NO. 6 March 14th 1958 Price: 15 Pf., 5c., 3d.

# NEW JET GETS SET

## East Germany Unveils 72-Seater 500 mph Turbo-Jet Airliner

The German Democratic Republic will soon be one of the very few nations building jet airliners. At present the Soviet Union and France are the only countries in the world with jet airliners in regular passenger service.

The prototype of the East German jet-liner, the "152" is now nearing completion at the Dresden Plane Works. Ground testing of the plane is scheduled to begin in May, and the first flight test a few weeks later.

Experts in West Germany and other parts of the world have been astonished by the quick development of East German civil plane building, which only started two and a half years ago. Since then the Dresden works have produced a steady stream of conventional propeller aircraft of the type "IL 14", produced on Soviet licence, and lately of an improved type "IL 14 P", further developed by German technicians. These planes have given a good account of themselves on the airlines of the German Democratic Republic and several other socialist states.

Work on a jet-liner began almost as soon as the new Dresden works went into operation, and the speedy progress is largely due to the pooling of Soviet research in the jet field.

The high-shoulder jet-liner, with a wing-span of 88 feet, and just over 100 feet long, will be powered by four jet-turbines mounted in twin gondolas under the wings. Each engine will have a maximum thrust of nearly 7000 lbs.

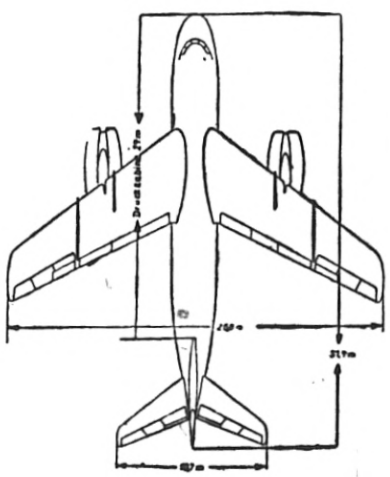
The pressurised cabin will provide accomodation for 72 passengers in the tourist version, or 48 passengers in the luxury version. The plane will have an estimated speed of about 500 mph, and an optimum flying height of about 35,000 feet.

It is claimed that the new "152" will have particularly favourable landing characteristics, owing to the use of retractable flaps in the wings, and it should be possible to operate with the plane from nearly all airfields now in use for propeller planes.

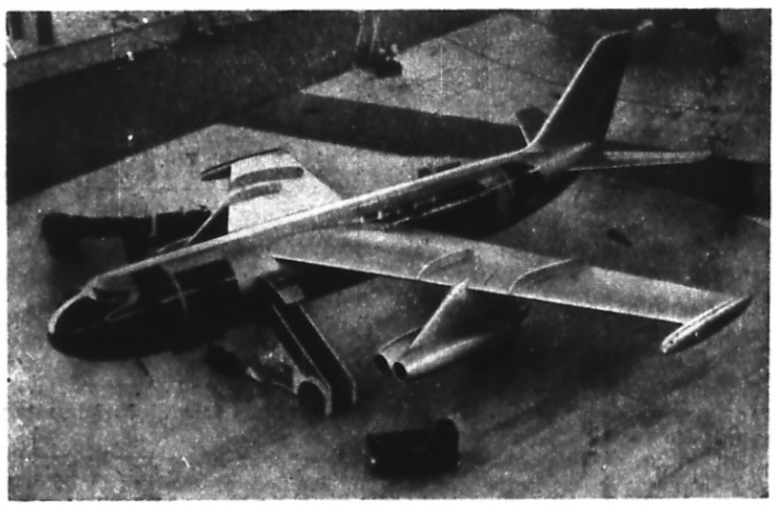
A model of the jet plane, together with a full-sized cutaway of one of its motors, was on show at the Leipzig Trade Fair early in March, and attracted great attention.

"The Times" London reported on March 3rd: "It has been left to East Germany to surprise and impress, and this it has done with a model of a 72-seater turbo-jet airliner. The prototype is to be ready this year. The turbine airliner 152, as it is called, is a high-wing, fourengined monoplane with engines slung in pairs below the wings, and it has attracted considerable attention . . .

"The designer is Professor Baade, who before the war worked for Junkers, and the prototype is being built at the State-owned aircraft works at Dresden, where 20,000 men are employed. Should it prove successful, the effect it will have in the Federal Republic, where only light aircraft are being made, is likely to be not much less than that of the first sputnik."



*The silhouette of the new E. German plane*



*A model of the new jet-liner shown at this year's Leipzig Fair*

# GOING UP

## Facts & Figures on East German Economy

Industrial production in the German Democratic Republic increased by eight percent in 1957, and the production plan for the year was overfulfilled by 1.6 percent, according to the official report on the year, published in Berlin on February 28th.

Here are some of the main points from the plan report. A selection of the statistics appended to the report are reproduced on this page:

### Industrial Production

The overfulfillment of the plan for 1957 is due to the excellent achievements of the workers, and also to the improved supply of raw materials, both from internal sources and through expanded trade with both socialist and capitalist countries. All branches of industry overfulfilled their plans for the year, with the exception of the heavy engineering industry. In the case of heavy engineering, production was seven percent higher than in 1956 instead of the nine percent originally planned.

Despite a five percent increase in electricity production, the power plant could still not meet all demands, which led to load shedding, and helped to account for a lag in chemical production in the last quarter of the year.

Pig iron production was considerably above the original plan figures, owing to increased coke imports from the USSR and Poland, and better utilisation of smelting facilities.

The plan report noted that lack of various raw materials had hampered the engineering industry in general, and had made it impossible in some cases to fulfil export contracts on time.

In the light industrial field the assortment and quality of many goods had been improved. In the clothing industry there had been a considerable increase in production, particularly of children's clothing, but consumer wishes had not yet been fully met.

The foodstuffs industry had had a successful year, with big increases in the main goods.

Productivity throughout the whole of industry continued to rise, with an average increase of five percent during the year. During the year the 45-hour week was introduced in most branches of industry, and this meant that the productivity per hour had in fact increased by about 10 percent.

### Building

Investment in housing increased by 21 percent compared to 1956, and a total of 28,000 housing units more than in 1956 were completed. About one fifth of the new housing was erected by workers' building co-operatives. The plan report noted that an intensive effort must be made to increase facilities for making prefabricated building parts if the target of 50% industrialised building was to be reached by 1960.

### Agriculture

A total of 520 new agricultural production cooperatives, or collective farms, were formed in 1957, bringing the total to 6691. At the end of 1957 just over one quarter of the arable land in East Germany was included in production cooperatives. Detailed figures for acre-crops showed that production was rising faster on production cooperatives than on privately-owned farms.

The fodder situation on both production cooperatives and private farms had been improved by a 63 percent increase in the acreage under maize.

Production plans for animal products were overfulfilled in most cases, with 12 percent more beef and 27 percent more eggs. Improved fodder led to a 12 pound increase in the average weight of pigs slaughtered.

### Foreign Trade

Exports in 1957 were 29 percent up on the 1956 figure, and imports were up 21 percent. The balance of payments was considerably better than planned. Over 73 percent of the total foreign trade was with countries of the socialist family; trade with Egypt, Syria and the Sudan was doubled, and trade with India increased 70 percent.

### LATEST PRODUCTION FIGURES

| | 1956 | 1957 |
|---|---|---|
| Electric power (M.kw hours | 31,200 | 32,700 |
| Hard coal (thousand tons) | 2,743 | 2,753 |
| Soft coal (thousand tons) | 205,900 | 212,600 |
| Pig iron (thousand tons) | 1,574 | 1,663 |
| Passenger cars (thousands) | 28 | 36 |
| Motorcycles (thousands) | 68 | 77 |
| TV sets (thousands) | 48 | 99 |
| Wrist watches (thousands) | 1,816 | 2,169 |
| Perlon material (thousand square metres) | 2,328 | 2,828 |
| Wool worsted (thousand square metres) | 26,525 | 28,690 |
| Meat (thousand tons) | 527 | 562 |
| Butter (thousand tons) | 120 | 128 |
| Cigarettes (millions) | 17,473 | 18,096 |
| Cigars (millions) | 839 | 1,046 |

### Standard of Living, etc

The total income rose by over three and a half thousand million marks in 1957 compared with 1956. About one third of this increase was due to big pension increases at the beginning of the year.

Total sales of consumer goods increased by over six percent. Nearly five percent of all industrial goods were sold on hire-purchase agreements; 75 percent of this total was made up of furniture, radios and TV sets.

# BRITISH M.P.s IN LEIPZIG

Five British M. P.s from all parties were amongst the prominent foreign guests at the Leipzig Spring Fair at the beginning of March.

The M. P.s were Arthur Lewis and Maurice Orbach (Labour), Burnaby Drayson and Montgomery Hyde (Conservative) and Clement Davies, leader of the Liberal Parliamentary Party.

Apart from inspecting the fair, the M. P.s had a two-hour talk with Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht. Reporting on the chat, "Neues Deutschland", official organ of the Socialist Unity Party, stated that "all participants had shown their desire to bring the two peoples and the two states closer together, and to help the cause of international relaxation and cooperation".

"The very lively exchange of opinions showed that the five M. P.s agreed to a large extent with the views of the Government of the German Democratic Republic on the solution of the German problem" the paper stated.

# East Germany
# Second Socialist Industrial State

The German Democratic Republic is now the second biggest industrial producer amongst the states of the socialist family, Deputy Prime Minister Heinrich Rau announced on March 1st, when opening the Leipzig Industrial Fair.

"The German Democratic Republic has become an important economic factor both inside the socialist family, and also in the ranks of European nations" stated Herr Rau, who is also Minister of Inner-German and Foreign Trade.

"In industrial production and in foreign trade we occupy the second place amongst the socialist countries, and we have the fifth highest industrial potential of all European states. Our extensive trade and other economic relations with the socialist countries give a sure guarantee for our economy against the uncertainties of the capitalist world market, and also against any politically-inspired attacks by the embargo-strategists."

At the same time, trade exchanges with the capitalist countries were steadily growing, Herr Rau stated. In 1957 trade with these countries was nearly one quarter higher than in 1956, and trade with West Germany had grown by about 29%.

Trade between East Germany and the states of the near and middle east was growing particularly rapidly: figures for this trade were doubled during 1957. Plans for 1958 foresaw that the United Arab Republic (Egypt, Syria, Yemen) would become East Germany's best customer amongst the non-socialist states, with the single exception of West Germany.

Trade with India had not increased as rapidly as had been foreseen, owing to import restrictions which the Indian Government had been forced to impose, but a supplementary trade agreement with India in the second half of 1957 had opened the way for maximum developments through barter agreements. Herr Rau suggested that similar agreements could be concluded with other states which found it necessary to impose import restrictions.

In his speech Herr Rau emphasised the importance of the long term trade agreements which had been concluded between the German Democratic Republic and various other socialist states. These agreements, which cover the next three years, amount to 20 thousand million roubles with the Soviet Union, 2,500 million roubles with Czechoslovakia, and slightly more with Poland.

---

# THEY SAY: Western Comments on Leipzig Fair

### "New York Times" March 2nd

*Western Comments on Leipzig Fair*

The fear of an economic depression in the west has brought thousands of industrial concerns to the spring session of the Leipzig Fair . . .

The fair, probably Europe's greatest exhibition of its kind before World War II, has become a meeting ground for Eastern buyers and Western producers. The fair's publicity directors leave no doubt in anyone's mind that they have designed the show as an aid to East-West trade . . .

The high participation of Western industry in what is primarily a showcase of the Eastern world is attributed here to a sharp rise in interest in Eastern markets caused by unfavourable trends in Western markets . . .

East Germany also has made a considerable effort to prove its industrial capacity. Its exhibits are intended to remind the West that it is one of the most highly industrialised states in the Soviet bloc and that its heavy equipment plants are competitive . . . The East German exhibits of pumps, turbines and electrical equipment indicate considerable capacity.

In two respects, East German industry may have surpassed West Germany: aircraft production and atomic energy . . .

A road trip through nearby villages and towns enroute to Leipzig made it possible to make superficial comparisons between conditions today and two years ago. The villages and towns seemed neater despite the unpleasant winter weather. The inhabitants, particularly the children, appeared better clothed, not only in terms of warm clothing but also from the point of view of style.

### "The Times" London March 3rd

A trade agreement between Britain and East Germany amounting to about £ 10 m. in each direction is confidently expected by British exhibitors at the Leipzig Fair this year. A decision is imminent, according to the representatives of companies connected with the negotiations.

A representative of a prominent company said today that, after frequent East German attempts to negotiate a trade agreement, unacceptable to Britain for political reasons, it had been agreed that an arrangement between the Federation of British Industries and the East German Chamber of Foreign Trade was permissible . . .

Though many complain of the difficulties, more British companies are represented here this year than ever before. About 60 are officially listed, but some represent other companies, and the total is probably about 100. Among the newcomers is Imperial Chemical Industries.

### "The Times" London March 4th

The Leipzig Fair is a serious business occasion, and the misadventures of intinerant correspondents are of little importance. East Germany last year bought foreign goods amounting to 321m. marks, of which 181m. marks were spent in the west. Business was done here with other countries. This is the kind of bait which kept the early merchant adventurers waiting patiently on the banks of the Canton river.

# SOVIET TROOPS LEAVE

## By Phyllis Rosner

Three busloads of journalists from East and West Berlin were among those travelling to Fuerstenwalde, just outside Berlin, to watch the departure of the first of the additional 41,000 Soviet troops being withrawn from the German Democratic Republic.

It was very cold on that crisp, sunny morning. The buses, beautifully equipped new models from Hungary, were warm and each of us had been provided with an 'iron ration' of sandwiches and fruit.

We arrived in Fuerstenwalde in good time. Suddenly we noticed our bus had been standing still for a very long time in the middle of the narrow high street. The pavements were crowded with people, old and young, all hurrying. Some were carrying bunches of gay, spring flowers, others had a flag and one small group marched along the street carrying a banner saying in Russian "Friendship".

Our bus was soon one of a long row of vehicles of all sorts, including a sprinkling of horse-drawn carts. We were all held up in the main street because, by an unhappy trick of fate, a lorry transporting logs (probably eventually to be converted into telegraph poles, judging by their length) was jammed right across the main street.

The 'big-wigs', including the personnel of the Western Military Missions were diverted into a narrow side street, but our bus was captive. After a while we decided we could not wait for the firemen to finish sawing the logs in two and we went on foot.

When we arrived the farewell ceremony had just started. We mounted the rostrum; to our left was a group of Soviet and People's Army officers interspersed with a number of civilians including Dr. Hilde Benjamin, German Democratic Republic Minister of Justice.

On our right, looking somewhat ill at ease I thought, were the chiefs of the three Western Military Missions (British, American and French) accredited to the Soviet Military Mission in Potsdam. Facing the rostrum was a large crowd, nearly filling the square.

The speeches were short and to the point. Although it was very cold and we were stamping our feet to try to keep warm the atmosphere was warming. After Gerhard Gruenberg, Socialist Unity Party Secretary, had spoken, Major Krivin, an officer of the mechanised unit about to leave Fuerstenwalde for home and civvy street, said a few words. He began, "This is a happy day for us." A few minutes later some of his troops were marching by, their faces echoing his words. Now and again a child ran forward and pressed some flowers into the hands of a soldier.

In the meantime one of the American reporters had been interviewing the head of the American Military Mission and a high-ranking Soviet officer. He then got hold of a jovial Soviet soldier. The interview went very smoothly, with plenty of good-humour. Suddenly, with a twinkle in his eye, the soldier said: "Now I'd like to ask you a question." "Go on, what is it," the reporter replied. "Well, I'd like to know when you are going to withdraw your troops," was the soldier's question.

It was getting near zero hour. We piled into our buses and drove to the station to watch the train, loaded with soldiers and officers with their equipment, pull out. On the platform was a large crowd; children were milling all over the place. Most of the Soviet officers were surrounded by groups of small boys begging for a coin as a souvenir or thrusting their addresses into the hands of soldiers.

Many of the soldiers had taken up position waiting for the train to leave. Some were holding their flowers, others arranging the Pioneer Organisation scarf given to them on their way to the station and, as I saw, on the platform. The soldiers were grinning and joking with the crowd with the help of an interpreter.

Most of them looked as if they had just left school. We were surprised to learn that Sergeant Alexander Romanov was already twenty-three. He had been in East Germany over two-and-a-half years and had been home to Stalingrad on leave in 1956. We asked him what he was looking forward to most when he got home. First he replied, "Work", then he shook his head and said, "No, I'm looking forward most to seeing my girl-friend."

Another soldier, 21-year old Anton Suenko, told us he was intending to study when he returned home. His answers were very short. For instance when asked how he had enjoyed his stay, he replied, "Good", and his opinion of the German girls: "very pretty".

The correspondents were chatting freely to the soldiers and to some of the crowd there to see them off. One group of workers was describing how Soviet soldiers had helped to put out the blaze at the Fuerstenwalde tyre works some years ago. Other workers were chatting with soldiers they had made friends with. I heard one worker say to his colleague, "Heh, George, shall I go and ask the British officer when the British are going to leave?"

It was five o'clock. The guard cried, "stand back please" and slowly to waving of handkerchiefs and flowers, to cries of "auf Wiedersehen" the train pulled out.

This was the first group of the 41.000 additional troops to leave the GDR by April 10. By this date the Soviet Union will have withrawn 91,000 troops from East Germany in the past two years.

The original announcement about the withdrawal of the additional 41,000 men was made on February 17 last by General V. M. Sacharov, commander of the Soviet forces in East Germany. At the time the General said it was unfortunate that the Western Powers had not responded in a like fashion to the Soviet Union's contribution to relaxing tension by the reduction of her armed forces. An agreement among the Great Powers on withdrawals would considerably contribute to bringing together the two parts of Germany and to solving the problem of peacefully reunifying the country, the General pointed out.

**Democratic**
**GERMAN REPORT**

**Subscription rates: 4 marks, 8/- sterling. $ 1.25 per annum or pro rata, postage paid.**

**Subscriptions may be paid at the following addresses:**

**Democratic Germany: At all post offices.**

**Britain: Collet's Subscription Dept, 45 Museum St. London W. C. 1**

**All other communications should be addressed to:**

**Democratic German Report,**
**Friedrichstrasse 167 III,**
**Berlin W 8,**
**Germany.**

# CO-OPS IN EAST GERMANY

## By Joan Becker

The cooperative movement had to start almost from scratch again in Germany after 1945, since it had been suppressed during the nazi era.

In 1932 there had been in the area which is now the German Democratic Republic less than a million members in the co-op associations; today there are about 3,200,000 members and 233,000 employees.

This rapid build-up was possible because the Soviet Military Administration recognised the importance of the movement, and its order issued on December 18th 1945 laid down the principles on which it has since developed.

Corresponding measures were taken in West Germany only in 1948 and development has been much slower there. Between 1949 and 1956, membership in West Germany only increased from a little over one million to 2,320,000 and the number of co-op employees from 28,609 in 1949 to 65,190 in 1956 — spread over a much larger area, of course. This slowness is probably largely due to the difficulty of competing with the big chain and department stores.

In the German Democratic Republic the "Konsum" shops are on an equal footing with all other shops and, in fact, now deal with nearly one third of all retail trade in the Republic, as compared with less than 5 per cent in West Germany.

There are now about 30,000 Konsum shops, about half of them in country districts and half in the towns. Town shops are mostly specialised — groceries, fruit and vegetables, dairy produce, meat, fish, bread and cakes, tobacco, sweets etc. — but there are an ever-increasing number of Konsum shops in other branches where the co-ops previously had little influence, such as clothing, shoes, furniture, hardware, bicycles etc. You can find shops of all sizes, too, from tiny sweet and tobacco shops up to big department stores.

Country shops are taking on more and more the character of general stores, with quick lunch counters, restaurants and assembly rooms attached. There are already 230 of these Konsum general stores, which serve several villages, scattered about the Republic.

Konsum shops in the factories, of which there are now 1,270, deal mainly in groceries, tobacco and drinks, but some also have textile and hardware departments, and these are a great convenience especially for working women.

The co-ops themselves now own over 1,700 industrial enterprises of various kinds, including bakeries, furniture, confectionery, clothing, shoe and tobacco factories, as well as a number of larger enterprises which had belonged to them before 1933 — match, soap and biscuit factories (the match factory in Riesa even does a considerable export business), brush, clothing and canning factories and a mill — which had been confiscated under Hitler and were returned free of charge in 1945 to co-op ownership through the Soviet Military Administration.

But these do not of course supply anything like the requirements of the Konsum shops. Konsum managers can buy where they like — direct from state wholesale departments, from private factories, from cooperative production enterprises and from peasant farmers and agricultural production cooperatives. They also make their own import arrangements where they can.

Until quite recently the problem had been to get enough goods into the shops to supply customers' most urgent needs. But in the last year or two there has been a noticeable improvement in the supply of consumer goods and customers are no longer satisfied with make-shift arrangements and poor service in their shops. Much more attention has now to be paid to packaging, window-decorating, hygiene etc. And this is possible now, too, because the Konsum associations have been able to accumulate funds.

Members pay an initial fee of 50 marks (20 marks for additional members of the same family over 16 years of age) on joining their co-op branch, and the annual dividends on purchases encourage them to buy as much as possible in Konsum shops. This dividend was for some years 3 %, but was then reduced to 1.3 % so as to allow for more investment in property and equipment. The percentage may rise somewhat in the next few years, but the general tendency is to give members the benefit of better and quicker service, better trained staff and finer shops, rather than to worry too much about paying back dividends on purchases.

To judge by the new shops which are being opened now, this policy is fully justified, too. Konsum managers have been making a detailed study of Swiss, Swedish and Czech self-service shops, and since the beginning of 1957 a number of very attractive self-service shops, mainly for groceries, has been opened in Berlin and other larger towns. These are absolutely on a level with the HO (state-owned) shops, although they have been built and equipped with Konsum funds alone.

*A new self service Co-op hardware shop in East Berlin. Modern shops like this are still an exception, but more are planned.*

One of the newest and most modern of these is the "Fix" (slang for "quick") hardware store in the Schoenhauser Allee in Berlin, which was opened last November. Frau Lehmann, the assistant manager, whom I went to see, has been working in various Konsum shops ever since 1945. She well remembers the days when she worked in cold, broken-down little shops with boarded-up windows because there was no glass, and people stood in the queue for a pot of mustard or a pound of herrings.

Frau Lehmann told me that the "Fix" shop is an experiment and that they have probably not yet got quite the right assortment in it. The shop itself covers about 390 square yards and has stands for hardware and kitchen utensils, glass and porcelain, leather goods, cheap textiles, house slippers, stationery, cosmetics and cheaper jewellery and toys. The lighting is excellent — from big windows on two whole sides of the shop and long tubular neon ceiling lights — and half a dozen pillars down the centre are entirely covered with mirror, which makes it even lighter.

I was a little surprised to hear that by far the biggest problem in a self-service shop of this kind is pricing. You can't write on plastics, sticky labels fall off some substances, tickets can be exchanged by light-fingered customers and so on. But prices must be clearly marked in some way, so that cashiers can do their job quickly. In self-service groceries, on the other hand, the biggest problem is packaging; anyone who goes shopping in East Germany knows that the advertising value of gay, clearly marked packages has not been fully appreciated here.

Some stands do have shop assistants — to give advice or to pack up, for instance, at the cosmetics, porcelain, jewellery and leather goods stands. There are 33 employees here — probably the minimum for a shop of this size, Frau Lehmann thinks. They work in two shifts, so as not to exceed maximum working hours, and there is an enormous amount to be done in the store-room, which is in the cellar and runs the whole length of the shop, and in frequent window-decorating and new arrangement of stands. Frau Lehmann believes firmly in the advertising value of new window decorations. Shop windows in East Germany used to be so dull and tired-looking that there was no incentive to go inside, but there has been an enormous improvement in this lately.

Generally speaking, there is a shortage of good modern calculating machines in East German shops; many Konsum shop assistants waste literally hours totting up small accounts, especially in groceries. But Frau Lehmann showed me three brand-new West German machines which not only reckon out each customer's bill but also the day's takings. The Konsum bought a number of these at last year's Leipzig Fair.

Frau Lehmann also told me something about conditions for Konsum employees. All shops are required by law to provide a rest room and washing facilities and a warm midday meal for their employees. This was not so easy here; the shop itself was formerly a private shop and a driving school, for both of which the Konsum had to find other accomodation before they could take over.

Office and storage space is barely sufficient, so that they had to negotiate with the tenants of a small adjoining apartment and find them other accomodation, too, in order to make room for proper wash-rooms, toilets and a rest-room for the staff.

Even here there is no space for a proper kitchen and dining-room, so the Konsum has made an arrangement with a neighbouring enterprise to share their canteen for midday meals at the reasonable price of one mark per meal.

As in other districts, the Konsum has a small health centre run by two nurses and with a doctor in attendance four times a week.

This shop in the Schoenhauser Allee is of course one of the few really modern Konsum shops; many of them, especially the groceries, are still poky, inconvenient and much too small. But they will get their turn for repairs and renovations. As you walk through the streets today, you see scaffolding and "Closed for Renovation" notices everywhere, and a good proportion of these are Konsum shops.

I had a talk with the manager of the first Konsum grocers' shop to be opened in the Stalin Allee, some years ago. Herr Drueckler, who has also been with the Konsum ever since he came back from prisoner-of-war camp in 1947, told me something about difficulties in getting staff. Most young people prefer to work in the factories, because a shop assistant's pay is not very good; but the Konsum is trying hard to help young people to learn more. Training will be lengthened to three years again next year — two days' theoretical and three and a half days' training in the shop. In country districts the Konsum also has some apprentices' hostels and complete training combines, so as to avoid long hours of travelling for young apprentices.

After their apprenticeship is over young people are encouraged to attend other classes and if they show special ability they can go to six-week, two-month and four-month special courses, with pay, to qualify as managers, special buyers etc. One girl who began as an apprentice in this shop was delegated to the Workers' and Peasants' Faculty of the University, where she matriculated and is now studying for a degree.

The Konsum employs many older women, too, who have household cares and children to look after. It is much more difficult to help them to qualify themselves further because they have, so to speak, two jobs and not much time or energy left over for study.

The trade union groups try to help with this, too, and the regular monthly trade political lessons for all staff do give them some general ideas about developments. Herr Drueckler told me, too, that it is difficult to get up very much cultural or sports activity amongst the staff, because of their awkward working hours. This grocery is open from 7 in the morning till 9 in the evening without a midday pause — two full working shifts — so that it is extremely difficult to get the whole staff together at any time.

The Konsum moved into a fully equipped shop here, since it was part of the early Stalin Allee plan, but they have since paid back the costs out of Konsum funds. You can see here how little experience East German architects had a few years ago; the shop is cramped, there is practically no storage space, and half of the back room has been converted into a (rather dismal) rest room for want of a better place.

The idea was to centralise social life in the districts, and the Konsum has some very fine district clubs. But new shops are now being provided with better accomodation for staff and more storage space on the spot.

Herr Drueckler was able to tell me more about members' influence on the co-ops, because grocery stores act as centres for entering new members, paying out dividends and electing shop commissions. There are quarterly meetings of members, and every two years a commission is elected in each small district-containing perhaps twelve or fifteen Konsum shops. Commission members

then divide up the supervision of shops between them, most attention still being paid to grocers', vegetable and butcher shops, and look into supply difficulties, hygienic conditions and so on. They also help with inventories, canvassing for new members, organising entertainments and other cultural activities.

About three quarters of all members of the cooperative associations belong to no political party, and the Konsum itself is entitled — as a mass organisation — to seats in district parliaments and in the central People's Chamber, where it shares a twelve-man fraction with the Peasants' Mutual Aid Association.

# E. GERMAN FERTILISER FOR BRITISH FARMS

A British parliamentary delegation led by Mr. G. B. Drayson, Conservative M. P. and chairman of the British parliamentary trade commission, visited the East German potash works in Stassfurt late in 1956.

Mr. Drayson was definitely interested in buying artificial manure for, as he explained to the works manager, what British farmers urgently need is a pure potash fertiliser with a high magnesium content which does not clot when it comes in contact with moist air.

This is not as simple as it sounds and works manager Dauer, who knew a great deal about potash mining and processing, could not promise anything at the time, since the potash fertiliser then being produced in his works did not meet these requirements. It had a magnesium content of 8 to 14 per cent, but the pure potash content was only about 33 per cent. American and West German firms were producing potash fertilisers with a considerably higher potash content.

But the biggest stumbling block was to produce a compound which would flow freely under damp atmospheric conditions. So he could only promise to do his best to produce a suitable substance.

Dauer entrusted Arno Eiche, the young manager of the branch works in Achenbach, with the experiments, and he and his senior foreman, Franz Zeidler, worked over-time for weeks on the job. Their first big success was a fertiliser with 15 per cent magnesium sulphate and forty per cent pure potash content.

But the second problem took longer to solve. A number of experiments ended in failure and it was not until they decided to try granulating the salts by adding fine salt after centrifuging that they succeeded in producing a coarse granulated fertiliser which retained its form in moist air.

So one day works manager Dauer was able to pack his bag and set out for London with samples of this new artificial fertiliser. He still did not know how the product compared with the newest West German and American fertilisers, so that the answer he received from Propane Fertilisers Ltd, London, was extremely encouraging.

This firm wrote that Magnakali, as the new fertiliser is called, was the first freely flowing fertiliser they had seen in this coarse granulated form and that, as far as they knew, no other firm had as yet succeeded in putting a product of this kind on the market.

Propane Fertilisers also assured the works that Magnakali could prove extremely helpful to English farmers in overcoming the shortage of magnesium in the soil.

On the strength of this the Stassfurt potash works set about converting to Magnakali production in a big way. They drew on investment funds to build a granulating spiral, pipes were re-directed, a drum sieve installation set up. Everything from planning to construction was completed by the works itself in a matter of months instead of the normal year or more.

So when orders did not come in at once works manager Dauer began to feel a little nervous. But he need not have worried. Orders did come eventually and by the last quarter of 1957 the first shipment of free-flowing granulated Magnakali was sent off to England.

This year one third of the Stassfurt works' total production will go to British farmers; New Zealand and San Salvador have ordered sample shipments and regular orders have come in from the Belgian Congo, Panama and Ecuador.

*(Abridged from "Volksstimme", Magdeburg)*

# DIRECT BERLIN—LONDON TV LINK

A direct TV transmission from East Berlin was shown on BBC television in Britain for the first time on March 8th, when the finals of the World Handball Championships were transmitted from the Werner Seelenbinder Hall in East Berlin.

The international link-up was a fine example of East-West cooperation. The handball championship was photographed by East German operators, using mainly Pye TV cameras imported from Britain. The picture was picked up in West Berlin, transmitted to West Germany, and then on via Belgium and France to British screens. A British commentator was present in the East Berlin hall to give a running commentary in English.

This first West European link-up with the East German TV system was also shown in West Germany, Austria, Denmark, France, Sweden, Belgium and Switzerland.

The BBC's "Radio Times" noted that the telecast was presented "by courtesy of the East German Television Service".

This new TV link means that it is now technically possible to present live TV telecasts in Britain from East Germany and Czechoslovakia, and also in the near future from Poland and Hungary, with which TV links are in course of completion. As soon as the Soviet television service is linked with the Czechoslovak service it will also be possible to screen direct transmission from Moscow. This link is expected to be completed by 1960 at the latest.

## Obituary

The death was announced in East Berlin on March 6th of "General Gomez" who won international fame during the Spanish Civil War as commander of the 13th International Brigade. General Gomez, whose real name was Willi Zaisser, was 65 at the time of his death. In the twenties and thirties he played a prominent part in the revolutionary movement in a number of countries. He was first Minister of State Security in the German Democratic Republic until relieved of the post in July 1953.

# BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

This week I have been dusting off my Almanach de Gotha and sweating over the very complicated genealogical tables of European royal families in an effort to explain the intricate story of how Queen Anne, who reigned in Britain from 1702 to 1714, came to be responsible for the payment of large sums of money to some of Hitler's favourite princes.

Put like that, it sounds a little unlikely, but wait until you have heard the full story.

## Queen Anne is Dead

Queen Anne is dead, as we all know, but the deeds she did live after her. During her reign it turned out that there wasn't anyone to succeed her on the throne. The research experts got to work on the family tree and discovered that the next people in the line of succession were the sons of a certain Sophia, Electress of Hannover: my research workers assure me that Sophia was Queen Anne's second cousin once removed, or in other words the daughter of Anne's great-great-aunt.

Anyway a special law, called the Act of Settlement, was hurried through parliament in 1705 confirming the succession of Electress Sophia's eldest son: since he was not even a British citizen, the Act of Settlement, in a fit of broadmindedness, decreed that all direct decendants of the Electress Sophia should automatically become British citizens if they were not Catholics.

## Comic King

So much for the not particularly world-shaking events of 1705. In 1714 Queen Anne died and George I came to the throne: you may remember him as the rather comic king who could not speak a word of English. The Act of Settlement got a passing mention in the history books, and there the position rested until a few years ago, when a gentleman with the ear-shattering name of Duke Ernst August zu Braunschweig und Lueneburg, apparently for the lack of anything better to do, started studying British history.

He stumbled over the Act of Settlement, and the great idea occurred to him. A quick look at the family tree confirmed that he was a direct descendant of the Electress Sophia: therefore he was entitled to British citizenship. He went into action immediately, and after some complicated legal arguments in the British courts his claim was confirmed.

The results were unexpected: the decision of the House of Lords in December 1956 meant that all the descendants of the Electress were automatically British subjects by birth, and the royal and ducal rabbit-warrens have provided plenty of them: the Almanach de Gotha shows that there are about 400 of these brand-new British subjects in circulation today, including the Kings of Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Greece, the Queen of Holland, and a very large proportion of the petty princelings of Germany.

So far, so good, or so bad, whichever way you look at it. But the catch was that some of these princelings had fallen on bad times, and were looking around for a way to improve their financial circumstances. Many of them, of course, had been high-ranking officers in Hitler's Wehrmacht, and were consequently drawing the very liberal pensions granted them by the West German state, but a bit more spare cash always comes in useful.

## Pounds

So they sought for a way to turn their newly-found citizenship into hard cash — and promptly found it.

To explain the next step, we shall have to back-track a bit. A the end of the Second World War, large areas which had previously been German became part of the Polish state. In subsequent years various property in this new Polish territory which had belonged to bona-fide British citizens was nationalised or otherwise disposed of, and in 1954 an Anglo-Polish Agreement was signed under which more than five million pounds will be made available by Poland to satisfy the claims of these British citizens.

That is where the German princelings come rushing in again. Many of them, typical German Junkers, were large landowners in this area: now, as newly fledged Englishmen, they are putting in a claim for a lion's share of this compensation.

Here are some of the claims they have already filed:

Prince Ludwig of Hesse wants £ 170,000 pounds as compensation for his lost feudal seat in Hirschberg, now the Polish town of Jelenia Gora; the Grand Duchess of Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach and the Princess of Sachsen-Meiningen are jointly claiming £ 500,000 for a castle they lost near Breslau, today the Polish city of Wroclaw; Prince Friedrich Karl of Prussia wants £ 567,765 for his old estate at Flatow-Krojanke; and so on.

## Hard Cash

So you see it may pay off in hard cash to be a descendant of the Electress Sophia. I think the reaction of Mr Charles Rubens of London, who wrote a letter to "The Times" on the subject on January 8th, is worthy of note. Mr Rubens wrote:

"It would, I submit, be a monstrous anomaly if persons who during two world wars were enemy nationals, and whose Government had been the cause of the collapse of Poland, should now be entitled to participate in a fund which was established solely for the purpose of providing some small compensation to those unfortunate British nationals who had lost their assets in Poland. The matter is even more absurd when it is realised that this result is due to loose drafting of a Statute more than 250 years ago . . . At the very least Orders in Council of 1954 ought to be amended so as to prevent persons who were enemies of this country during the war from claiming in competition with those whose British nationality is of a more normal character."

And to that I have nothing to add.

## School Classes

In conclusion, to get away from the odour of slightly moth-eaten ermine, let us have a look at a couple of statistics about the size of school classes in East Germany and Britain. In English state schools in 1956, the average size of a class was 32.8 pupils. In Democratic Germany in the same year the average size of a class in basic schools (6—14) was 27.6, and in upper schools (15—18) it was 24.9.

Of course the average size of the class is not the only factor in providing children with a good education, but experienced teachers tell me that it makes a great deal of difference. So I would suggest a target for the British Ministry of Education to shoot at: to get the size of classes down to the level of the German Democratic Republic, that "far-off country of which we know little or nothing", to quote the historic saying of that easily-forgotten Premier Neville Chamberlain when he was selling Czechoslovakia down the river in 1938.

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet. Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167 III Berlin W 8, Telephone 22 29 68. Printed in Germany by (36). Veröffentlicht unter Lizenz-Nr. 694 beim Presseamt des Ministerpräsidenten der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik